

FOCUS ON THE FIELD

Trout Quality Maintenance in the Field

By Robyn Ledford, Blairsville Field Office
Does win-win sound familiar?

That seems to be the term floating around in every office, in every corporation or even small business today.

The NRCS Blairsville FO with the help of Monte Seehorn, retired U.S.F.S. Southeast Region Fisheries Biologist, is applying that term to the field.



The Blairsville FO serves Fannin, Rabun, Towns, and Union County



Georgia. Approximately 95% (or more) of the stream segments in these counties are Primary Trout Streams.

Due to this fact, this area is rapidly becoming a recreational and retirement mecca for those wanting to escape the hustle and bustle of metropolitan areas.

As roads are paved, houses are built, and agriculture lands are converted to subdivisions and commercial property, the hydrology of these watersheds are altered significantly.

This causes a snowball effect of water quality / trout habitat degradation:

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Dear Team Georgia!
by Leonard Jordan, State Conservationist

Welcome to Team Georgia's newest voice—the Conservation Connection – designed to keep our internal and external partners informed about the great conservation work being done throughout the state.

As an agency, NRCS has important information to share, from Farm Bill conservation activities and the new Technical Service Providers program to partnership efforts with the Georgia Association of Conservation District Supervisors, the Soil and Water Conservation Commission and others

that have an interest in our mission.

These opportunities highlight our need to inform, and be informed, of ongoing conservation efforts at the local, state



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Helpful Hints for Using the Voyager Card

By Tiffney Esslinger

Great News! I have some helpful information for those of you who use the Voyager card! In addition to the Voyager card being used to pay for fuel in Government-owned vehicles, it also pays for maintenance. Some service stations accept the Voyager card for payment of vehicle maintenance, be sure to ask the service station attendant if the Voyager card is accepted before authorizing maintenance work. The service station attendant can swipe the Voyager card, without a purchase, to make sure that it is accepted before any purchases are made. The information from the Voyager card, such as mileage and maintenance, are entered in a computer database to provide information about each vehicle within the USDA fleet. Since this information from the Voyager card is entered in a computer data-

base, the Voyager card is the preferred method of payment for vehicle maintenance. For a list of service stations that accept the Voyager card as a method of



payment for vehicle maintenance, go to www.voyagerfleet.com. The monthly limit for each Voyager card is \$9,999.00.

Sometimes the Voyager card does not work when the Government-owned vehicle needs fuel. There is a solution to this problem! There is a toll free number on the back of the Voyager card. The service sta-

tion attendant can call the toll free number for telephonic authorization of the purchase of gas for the vehicle. This toll free number may also be used if the Voyager card is lost, it might be worth keeping a copy of the toll free number in the glove compartment of the vehicle that you are driving.

If a Voyager card has been lost or it will not work, please contact me so that I can order you a new Voyager card as soon as possible. The wait for a new Voyager card is usually about one week. If a Voyager card is lost, I only have to replace the Voyager card. The current license plate number will appear on the new Voyager card.

I have received requests for new license plates, along with a new Voyager card after a Voyager card was lost. License plates only need to be replaced if one or both have been stolen or they are completely worn out. My e-mail address is tiffney.esslinger@ga.usda.gov. You may e-mail requests for new Voyager cards and/or license plates.

2003 Georgia Training Plan

By: Jim Dial

When everyone has developed their IDPs and training needs inventory and they have been prioritized by the Assistants for Field Operations, the Georgia Training Plan for 2003 will be developed. We will still use 1% of our budget for training. This amount has allowed us to provide exceptional training opportunities in the past and will continue to be supported by Mr. Jordan. The date to have the training needs inventory to the state office is September 30, 2002.

Technical Service Provider

The responsibility for training of Technical Service Providers belongs to NRCS. This training provides the Providers with information on location and access to our FOTG and other documents, policies, and directives that we operate from. We are developing this training and will offer it early in FY 2003 for anyone who would like to be a Technical Service Provider.

New Employees

As Georgia begins to implement the Farm Bill and bring our staff level up to our plan we must consider the rapid training that is needed for new employees. The Georgia Leadership team asked for a detailed outline of how to accomplish this training. Myself, Anthony Burns and David Ferrell were asked to prepare this outline and present it to the Leadership Team. When this was accomplished and input gained from all members of the Team, our policy was developed and provided in the Georgia Bulletin, which can be found at.

<http://www.ga.nrcs.usda.gov/gaadm/webbulletin/300bulletinseries/306-2-8.htm>

If you have not read this bulletin please do so, as it will become Georgia Policy for training for new employees.

Public AFFAIRS



By Mary Ann McQuinn

Thanks!

I owe a great debt of gratitude to those of you who so generously gave of your time to contribute articles and photographs to make our newsletter a success. As Mr. Jordan has stated, this can be a powerful tool for all of us to use in getting our messages out to the public who needs to hear them.

I will use this forum, as well as others, to provide you with information to use to help you get the word out about conservation.

With nearly a 100 offices to support, it is very difficult for me to visit with each of you on a regular basis. I do hope—and plan—to come to each field office or an event sponsored by a field office as time permits.

I am ecstatic to be back in my homeland and will work as hard and as fast as possible to get you the support you need to publicize who we are and what we do.

November articles due October 15th!

Programs

Farm Bill Update

By David Lamm

As we toil to get the work of implementing the Conservation Programs done, some times we lose site of the forest because of the trees.

While completing EBI's, CCC-1200's and Contract Support Documents is a large part of what we doing these days, it's not who we are as an agency.

Who we are is one of the few federal agencies that landowner's want to come to their farms. Who we are is the source of information to solve land use problems.

Who we are is a key member of community helping to make lives better. Who we are is the only people who know anything about conservation planning.

Keep this in mind the next time you fill out and EBI, maybe it will help keep things in perspective.

Below is a list of what the field office has been able to accomplish with the conservation programs made available to them.

EQIP

Georgia received \$6,630,800 in cost share dollars this year. This money has been obligated in 830 contracts to apply conservation measures.

It is interesting to note that while both allocations had approximately the same amount of cost share available, there were 538 contracts funded in the first sign up

and 292 in the second. This shows the impact of removing the cost as a factor in the ranking process

WHIP

Georgia received \$223,000 in WHIP funds for this year. Seventeen applications were received and fourteen were funded.

These included five individuals, eight SWCD's and one RC&D. Primary practices that were funded were prescribed burning and cover crops.

WRP

Georgia received \$5,300,000 in WRP funds to be utilized to purchase over 5,000 acres of easements. These acres are divided over eight different sites across the state.

FPP (Farmland Protection Program)

This year was Georgia's first year to participate in the Farmland Protection Program.

Thanks to the efforts of Cindy Haygood, Charlie Meeks and Butch Golf a call for proposals was held and six proposals were received.

This effort resulted in Georgia receiving \$1,095,000 in FPP funds to purchase development rights on three different sites, one each in Carroll, Madison and Walker counties.



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and national levels. This newsletter will be the perfect vehicle to keep us abreast of the latest technology, emerging issues, upcoming events, and conservation successes.

Georgia has a wealth of diversified conservation activities from the mountains to the coast.

Each of us is the key to the newsletter's success, so I encourage everyone to take an active interest in providing timely articles.

We want our newsletter to be both informative and interesting to a variety of audiences.

Ultimately, communication is key to the overall success of Team Georgia.

Take an opportunity to introduce this newsletter to others – in your community, with the partnership, or in your family. Let's keep NRCS from being a well kept secret!

Spread the word and become a powerful voice for conservation in Georgia.

Linking Girls with the Land

By Eunice Graham

NRCS will participate in the Linking Girls to the Land event in Lamar County on October 26th.

Linking Girls...is an event for young women in the Girl Scout program designed to highlight women in natural resource careers as well as provide hands-on activities in conservation. Ages range from 5-17, Daisies through Senior Cadets. The event is set up in stations with each girl visiting each station.

Persons from NRCS responsible for stations are Carmen Westerfield, Carol Oliver, Eunice Graham, and Carolyn Toman. Topics being covered

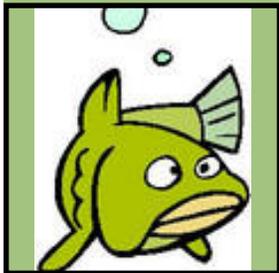
at these stations are wetlands, groundwater, water cycle, and soils. The groundwater station will host its own groundwater model and the girls will see water as it is being filtered through the soils. They will learn how something like a faulty septic system affects groundwater. Each girl will be allowed the opportunity to make her own soils tube and will actually be able to see the different levels from rocks at the bottom to the fertile top soil that supports plant life.

This is an exciting event for the Girl Scouts as they not only earn another badge, but have fun learning in the process. NRCS is proud to be a part of Linking Girls to the Land.

"If in the human economy, a squash in the field is worth more than a bushel of soil, that does not mean that food is more valuable than soil; it means simply that we do not know how to value the soil. In its complexity and its potential longevity, the soil exceeds our comprehension; we do not know how to place a just market value on it, and we will never learn how. Its value is inestimable; we must value it, beyond whatever price we put on it, by respecting it." from Home Economics by Wendell Berry, conservationist, farmer, and professor of English

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- Streambank destabilization causing sedimentation of streambeds



- Undercutting banks causing trees to fall in stream
- Loss of shade • Obstruct water flow causing whirl effect
- Stream width increases
- Water depth decreases

To address these problems, streambank stabilization structures, which act as trout habitat enhancers, are being installed throughout the four counties.

These structures are designed by Monte Seehorn with the use of large trees or boulders, strategically placed,

which absorb the water's power, and send it down the center of the stream.

These structures also provide the trout a place to harbor during storm events. Many areas, under natural conditions, do not have good trout habitats to begin with.

To improve existing conditions, gravel and rocks are removed from an area to create a deep pool.



This pool provides the trout a place they can gather in

extremely cold or hot weather.

The removed materials are then placed in another area creating a point bar. Vegetative materials salvaged during the installation of all structures are utilized to reestablish vegetation on critical areas associated with the

project.

As NRCS personnel, we are to apply TQM principles to our interactions with those we work and live with.

We also need to apply these principles to the practice alternatives that we recommend.

With the NRCS Blairsville FO technical assistance and Monte Seehorn's expertise, we can provide landowners and producers an effective, environmentally friendly streambank stabilization alternative, while addressing the need of trout habitat protection.



SPECIAL PROJECTS

No-Till Continues to Increase in Georgia

By James Dean

The acreage of no-till continues to increase in Georgia. In 2002, the acreage of no-till cotton increased to over 447,000 acres, which is 68% greater than in 2000. The acreage of no-till peanuts in Georgia increased by over 125% during the same period.

The data is from the recently completed the 2002 Conservation Tillage Survey. NRCS has conducted the survey since 1983.

These acreage increases are the result of the efforts of NRCS personnel, the Georgia Conservation Tillage Alliance, Inc., the five local conservation tillage alliances, and local soil and water conservation districts.

The conservation tillage alliances are farmer led groups that help others get started with no-till farming. The local alliances are headquartered in Douglas, Metter, Millen, Perry, and Sylvester.

Initially, no-till was used to reduce soil erosion. Over time, we have learned that no-till will also save fuel, time, labor, and equipment. Farmers also use no-till to

improve soil quality, water quality, air quality, and wildlife habitat and to reduce runoff and save soil moisture. Others use no-till so they will have time to spend with their family.

We look for the no-till acreage to continue to increase in Georgia.

SARE Accepting Applications

Southern Region SARE is soliciting pre-proposals/proposals for six types of grants in the FY2003 funding cycle:

Graduate Students call release in May

Research and Education call release in June

Professional Development call release in June

Producer call release in September

On-Farm Research call release in September

Sustainable Community Innovation call release in September

More information about the grant types, as well as copies of all calls can be obtained at: www.griffin.peachnet.edu/sare email:

- 1 Piedmont Soil and Water Conservation District Annual Conservationist of the Year Banquet Rock Eagle.
- 1 - 5 Southeast Georgia Jaycee Fair Swainsboro
- 7 Hall County Soil and Water Conservation District, Twentieth Annual Ladies' Night Affiliate Member Banquet, Gainesville
- 8 The Brantley County Forestry Tour will be held at the Brantley County Middle School in Nahunta. registration at 3:30. The tour begins at 4:00 p.m. and concludes at 7:00 p.m., with a meal served afterwards. A brief presentation will follow. Nahunta
- 7-11 Okefenokee Area Ag. Fair DC Walter James will be exhibiting Waycross
- 9-12 Southeastern Association of RC & D Councils Annual Meeting Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.
- 7-13 Elberton 12 County Fair This year's theme is "For Which it Stands"
- 10 Short Course, Callaway Gardens: National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). This is related to erosion and sediment control relating to "Water Discharges Associated With Construction Activities (Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Permittees). Registration 8:00AM. Contact Roosevelt SWCD, Troup County SWCD, or GA SSWCC. \$100 Registration fee before September 27th.
- 14-17 Sunbelt Ag. Expo Moultrie
- 15 Central Savannah River RC & D Annual Meeting Augusta
- 30 Longleaf Pine Field Day Troutman Farm Rome

November

December

January 2003

2 - 6 New Employee Skills Training Course.

22 Envirothon

- February
- 8 Satilla River Soil & Water Conservation District Forestry Field Day. The number to call for information is 912-681-5241. Ask for Linda or Tom.
 - 11-13 Conservation Tillage and Sustainable Agriculture Systems School. (This will be the third consecutive year the school has been held.) Douglas
 - 11-13 Small Farmer's Conference Albany
 - 25-26 Georgia Conservation Tillage Alliance, Inc., Annual Meeting Metter
 - 25-26 Georgia Conservation Tillage Alliance, Inc., Annual Meeting Metter



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PMC Gears Up for 2002 Farm Bill

By Donald Surrency

The Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center plans to increase foundation seed and plant production in 2002.

This plant materials are releases that will be provided to Crop Improvement Association and other plant and seed growers increasing acreage of commercial seed production.

High priority plants that are used for conservation tillage, wildlife habitat improvement, conservation buffers and grazing lands will be the areas where emphasis will be increased.

PMC Release Indiangrass for the Southeast

By Donald Surrency

Since 1989, the Jimmy Carter PMC have worked toward the release of a new Indiangrass to be adapted to the southeastern climate and soils.

This new release has been tested in North and South Georgia for forage

production, forage quality, as well as grazing tolerance.

The new material with the proposed name of 'Americus' was produced from germplasm collected in Alabama and Georgia by plant material and field office staff.

Since this new release is native to the Southeast, it has potential use as forage for livestock, a native for erosion control, urban conservation, landscaping, wildlife habitat improvement, and restoration of disturbed areas.



WINGS

By Forrest Hill

The 301 new participants were allocated \$248,438.00 in cash grants this year. These new funds will create an additional 1,967.6 acres of wildlife habitat throughout Georgia. To date, Project WINGS has provided \$1,391,995.00 in cash grants to convert more than 9000 acres of electrical transmission ROWs into productive wildlife habitat.

The South Carolina version, called Powerful Wildlife, is Project WINGS, but I don't track those dollars or acres. Also... besides the money, environmental benefits and positive PR for NRCS, WINGS has also won several national & environmental awards.

Congratulations! to John McEvoy

John created the winning name for our newsletter: Conservation Connection: A newsletter for conservationists!

**“Nothing will ever be attempted if all possible objections must first be overcome”--
Samuel Johnson**

Field Office Structure Committee

by Earl Brantley

State Conservationist Leonard Jordan has appointed a committee to look at field office structure/alignment in Georgia.

The purpose of this committee is to recommend a plan for field office structure which would enable NRCS to provide the best and most efficient delivery of technical services to our customers.

This plan will be implemented over a period of several years.

Members of the Field Office Structure Committee are:

Earl Brantley, Assistant State Conservationist (FO), Athens, Chairman

Richard Oliver, Assistant State Conservationist (O), Athens, Advisor

Valerie Pickard, District Conservationist, Marietta

Michael Watson, Assistant State Conservationist (FO), Griffin

Roger Webb, Soil Conservation Technician, Greensboro

Mary Leidner, District Conservationist, Tifton

Keith White, Soil Conservation Technician, Statesboro

Marty McLendon, District Supervisor, Leary

Mable Brown, District Supervisor and State Commission Member, Jasper

The committee held their first meeting in Perry on September 25, 2002.

The group identified issues and concerns which need to be considered in developing the plan.

The committee requested that additional information be made available relative to some of the issues raised.

This information is being compiled, and will be made available to the committee prior to the next meeting.

The committee has scheduled their second meeting on November 13, 2002.

COASTAL GEORGIA RC&D COUNCIL

Hurricane Marina Manual and Video

Coastal Georgia RC&D Council received the final national manual and video on hurricane preparedness for marinas from the contractors completing this work.

A \$48,000 FEMA/Georgia Coastal Management grant funded the project. Both FEMA and GCMP have reviewed and approved these information products.

The Council has asked for a proposal from Seimitsu Corp. to develop a Council website to make the manual available for downloading over the internet. This is the final work product the Council must complete under the

grant contract. Boat U.S. has agreed to provide 300 copies to its member marina owners and operators at no charge.

ISO Reduction Program

Coastal Georgia RC&D Council received approval of all 4 Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) Economic Action Grant applications it submitted.

The grants will fund Insurance Service Organization (ISO) reduction services for 4 fire departments to lower local homeowner and commercial insurance rates.

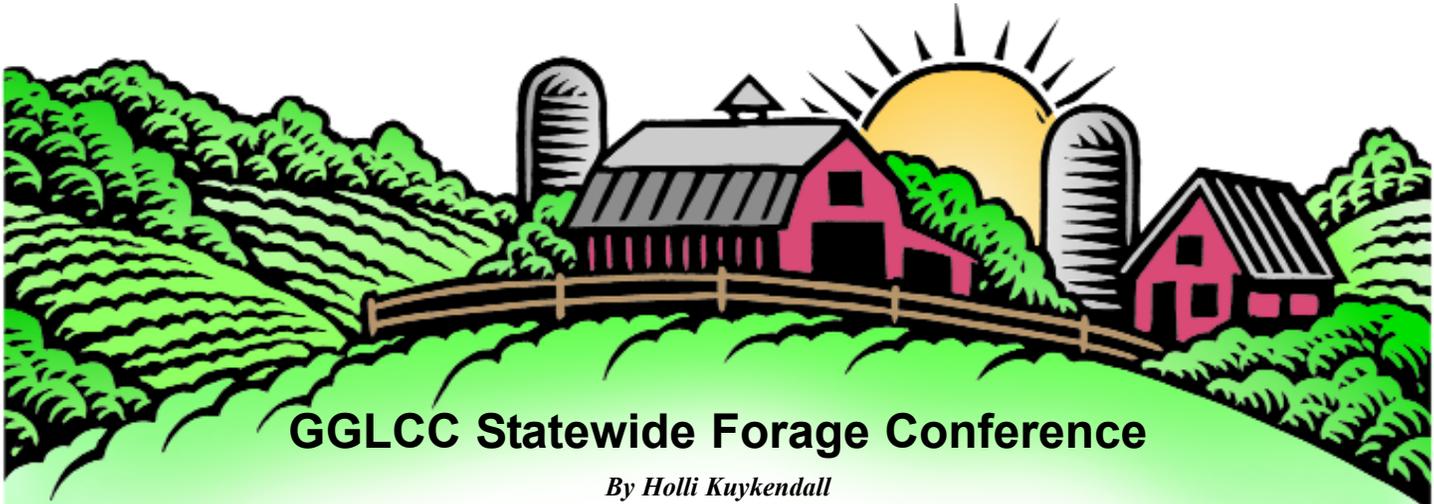
The counties and grant amounts are: Liberty County, including City of Hinesville (\$10,000), Long County (\$8,000), Tattnall County (\$10,000), Bryan County (\$3,300).

Community Forestry Program 2002

The Council's 2002 Tree Friendly Developer/Builder award winners were selected by the awards committee. They are:

- Elizabeth Puhak, Flagship Ventures – Bryan County
- Terry Stover, Sheffield Plantation – Camden County
- Hamby Corporation, Coast Cottages - Glynn County
- The Ford Plantation - Bryan County

Winners must make efforts to retain native tree canopy in their planning and building. The Awards Committee includes a landscape architect, arborist, Extension Forester, Georgia Forestry Commission Urban Forester, a developer who was last year's award winner, Georgia Coastal Management Program representative and the Council's Coordinator.



GGLCC Statewide Forage Conference

By Holli Kuykendall

The Georgia Grazing Lands Conservation Coalition is holding its third Statewide Forage Conference on Tuesday, December 10. This year the conference has been moved back to Athens and will be held at the new UGA Livestock Arena located at the corner of Whitehall Road and South Milledge Avenue. The GGLCC is working to achieve its third conference with over 225 people in attendance.

The featured speaker this year is internationally recognized grazing management expert, Jim Gerrish of the Forage Systems Research Center, University of Missouri. Dr. Gerrish developed the first comprehensive grazing school for producers and agency personnel several years ago.

His grazing school has provided the framework for many others to follow, including the grazing school that was held at Berry College a couple of years ago.

In addition to Dr. Gerrish's grazing management presentation, weed management, cow-calf and forage economics, alternative water supply and nutrient management, and premiums and discounts in the beef cattle marketplace will be covered.

As in past years, there will be a breakout session featuring an 'Ask the Experts' panel; and lunch is included in the cost of registration. The GGLCC is asking for your assistance with distributing conference information and the registration brochure.

News releases and information published across the state will suggest NRCS and Extension Service offices as contact sources for this information. You will receive a limited supply of professionally printed registration brochures by mail that can be distributed and copied, as needed. In addition, pdf versions of the conference brochure, a single page agenda, and a single page registration form can be downloaded and/or printed from the GGLCC Statewide Forage Conference website.

Please help make producers in your counties aware of this great educational opportunity; and please respond "yes" when your ASTC-FO offers you an opportunity to attend the conference. Especially with Dr. Gerrish on the program, this will be some of the best grazing lands training available this year.



RC&D HELPS ENHANCE GEORGIA'S RURAL COMMUNITIES

Most of Southwest Georgia Counties are considered rural areas with predominately agriculture, woodland, wildlife and natural resources.

As the demand for agricultural commodity prices decreases, it is evident that there is a need to provide alternative methods to assist in sustaining Southwest Georgia Agriculture and natural resources community base.



This issue not only a trend in Southwest Georgia but a crossed the United States.

For Example, a statement reads in the recent Rural America Magazine” Economic well being of the farm sector and farm households has been historically associated with incomes, especially income from farming. However, net income of the farm business may be a small percentage of the total income available to the farm family.

Since the early 1990s, just under half of United States farm operators indicated in USDA survey that their major occupation was something other than farming. Thus, the true economic well being of farms must account for all income, Both farm and off farm, as well as the growing importance if wealth such as home equity and investments (Rural America . Volume 17. Issue 2 . Summer 2002).

Because of recent drought, agricultural trends and other issues, The Golden Triangle Resources Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council is making an unprecedented approach to assist in sustaining Southwest Georgia Communities by promoting the Enhancing Georgia Communities Champaign or www.enhancinggeorgia.org. Some of the council’s projects funded to kick off this new Champaign are:

The Southwest Georgia Rural Cooperative Center - Funded \$ 190,000 from USDA- Rural Development Administration to establish Georgia’s first Rural Cooperative Center.

The center will focus on the research and the feasibility analysis and communication and development of rural coop-

eratives to support economic development. The first cooperative development venture will be focus on establishing the Southwest Georgia Outdoor Adventure Program. This cooperative will provide eco and agri-tourism-based training and marketing to outfitter and guides in Southwest Georgia Area. It is the goal of the cooperative not only to new create jobs, sustain farms and stimulate economic growth in the Golden Triangle RC&D Area, but to provide unique family experiences to visitors to the region and state.

The Targeting Our Aquifer Program (TAP) - Funded \$1,000,000

TAP’s I & II is a water quality program that covers Six counties in Southwest Georgia. The project objectives are: 1. To reduce nutrient and pesticide runoff which causes contamination of ground and surface water. 2.

Increased protection of groundwater recharge area through public education.

The TAP’S Program will implement the following best management practices: Poultry Stackhouses, Pesticide Mixing Stations, Irrigation Management, Well Curb, Cropland Conservation Practices and Education Demonstrations & Workshops. This project was funded by EPD.

The Spring Creek Irrigation Management Project - (Funded \$ 285,000)

This project will provide farmers with and computerized irrigation audit of evaluation on the efficiency of their center pivot irrigation systems.



The program also provide financial cost-share to repair inefficient irrigation systems .

The council will be working in partnership with the Georgia Soil And Water

Conservation Commission at the Hooks/ Hanner Environmental Center to implement this project.

Personnel Changes: Pay periods 16-17, 2002

New Hires:

Name	Grade Gs	Title	Location: City, Ga	Eff. Date
Marques D. Hunter (Intern)	5	Agricultural Engineer	Moultrie	07-28-2002
Cynthia T. Dorrough (Intern)	5	Agricultural Engineer	Athens	07-28-2002
Daniel J. Baker III	5	Soil Conservation Technician	Camilla	07-28-2002
Carolee Below	7	Soil Conservationist	Lagrange	08-11-2002
Grady L. Reeves	5	Soil Conservation Technician	Waynesboro	08-11-2002
Anita K. Tabb	5	Soil Conservation Technician	Donalsonville	08-11-2002
Warren Selph	5	Soil Conservation Technician	Eastman	08-11-2002
Cherie M. Manning	5	Soil Conservation Technician	Tennille	08-11-2002
Charles Z. Railey	5	Soil Conservation Technician	Valdosta	08-11-2002
Robyn Ledford	5	Soil Conservation Technician	Blairsville	08-11-2002
David A. Woodard	5	Soil Conservation Technician	Vienna	08-25-2002
Karen L. Bradley	5	Soil Conservation Technician	Lafayette	08-25-2002
Danny C. Tyson	5	Soil Conservation Technician	Tifton	08-25-2002

Reassignments:

Name	From			To			Eff. Date
	Grade - Gs,	Title,	Location	Grade - Gs,	Title,	Location	
Scotty L. Thomas	7	Soil Conserv. Tech.	Alamo	7	Soil Conserv. Tech.	Dublin	08-25-2002
Leslie Woodard	9	Soil Conservst.	Cochran	9	Soil Conservst.	Alamo	08-25-2002

Retirements:

Name	Grade Gs	Title	Location: City, Ga	Eff. Date
Louis Kaduk	11	Soil Conservationist	Eatonton	08-10-2002
Carneth E. Goff, Jr.	13	Asst. State Conservst. (FO)	Griffin	09-03-2002

Important Dates to Remember:

- Thrift Saving Plan Open Season: November 15, 2002 - January 31, 2003.
<http://www.tsp.gov/>
- Health Benefits Open Season: November 11, 2002 - December 9, 2002.
<http://www.opm.gov/insure/health/index.htm>